

October 21, 2022

If it please the court,

I first met Tom DeVelin 10 years ago when he was a 14-year-old Boy Scout on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout. He trekked through the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. After completing his junior year at Waverly High School, he enlisted at age 17 in the Ohio National Guard and took his basic training that summer and graduated from Waverly High next year.

When his National Guard unit was called up, he served with honor for over a year in Afghanistan in an anti-missle battery. He was responsible for the life and well-being of others on the U.S. Air Force base where he was assigned.

Whatever else he has done (and the facts speak for themselves) he is a veteran who served with honor in Afghanistan.

I'm sure this court is aware that the wounds soldiers suffer are not always physical. Sometimes they are emotional wounds when a young man is introduced to an environment where violence and death are constant possibilities. We require a lot of our young people in the military service. We hope they will not be killed or maimed during their time in harm's way, but sometimes the wounds are of an invisible nature.

In addition, Tom DeVelin was the unwilling witness to the suicide of a brother in arms after returning to the United States.

And after all that, he didn't seem to be the same young man any more. But I believe that when the court inquires of this young man, it will find that he is amenable to rehabilitation. And I would hope the court could provide emotional and mental health counseling with the goal of returning this man to an upright and productive life.

Respectively submitted,

**Thomas R. Castor
Chillicothe, Ohio**

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Henry and Rhonda Taylor
215 Skyline Drive
Waverly, OH 45690

October 24, 2022

To the Honorable Judge Morrison:

My husband and I would like to tell you a little bit more information about the Thomas DeVelin who is better known to his family and his friends as Tom or “The Boy” as his mom affectionally calls him still. As a judge, you have Tom’s fate in your hands. Making decisions about sentencing someone to serve time for crimes committed, must be very difficult, so we would like to give you a more complete picture of Thomas DeVelin. Over the past months we have watched the news outlets broadcast crimes that Tom has been accused of and the boy we watched grow up from an infant and frankly cannot believe that they are the same person, but they are as Tom has admitted making the guns on his 3D printer that he, also, made the book marks for his mother’s friends in book club.

Our family has known Tom since he was born as we are neighbors and my daughter and Katie, his sister, are best friends. Tom’s parents live a few houses down the street from us, and you couldn’t ask for better neighbors or friends than the DeVelin family. Growing up, Tom was very involved in Boy Scouts. He was active member and volunteer. In fact, my husband and I were honored to be invited and to attend his Eagle Scout ceremony. Tom has always showed respect for elders by saying yes Mrs. Taylor or No Mr. Taylor. In fact, we never heard a cuss word, foul language, or any racial slurs cross his lips. Tom sometimes struggled a little in school with his grades but excelled in band. Over the years, I can’t begin to count all the school or boy scout items we have purchased from Tom who was always active in both groups. If the group was picking up litter, lighting candles for the Jingle Bell parade, or attending a boy scout camp out, you knew he would be there. His involvement in our community was not always related to a group activity. For example, during a severe snow storm while Tom was still in high school, he was shoveling out a stranger’s car stuck on the hill next to his house late at night when my husband came home from his second shift job. Henry stopped to ask if he could help, he said I’ve got it Mr. Taylor, and proceeded to shovel out the car. He saw a need, and he was

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there to help. This is just one example of Tom's compassion for others.

Tom dreamed of being a soldier and serving his country. When he was in high school, he talked with us about his ambitions of joining the National Guard as my husband served six years in the Navy where he received the electronic training that he used throughout his career till he retired. Soon after we talked, Tom enlisted in the youth program that the National Guard offered with his parent's permission as he was under age of consent.

Tom actually went to their boot camp during the summer months while school was out. After Tom graduated, he continued with serving his country. When he was sent to Afghanistan, we worried and prayed for his survival which he did physically but not without mental scars. As our country became more divided left and right winged, Tom was ordered to duty, again, during the racial unrest that damaged our state. Last autumn, Tom was present, also, with his buddies when one of them shot himself.

When his mother, Toni, shared this with me, I know she was worried about him as I am. Although, Tom wants to be in the military, I believe being involved in this much violence has negatively impacted Tom mentally.

Tom has a strong support system in his family who have been crushed by all that has happened. They have arranged for Tom to get mental health counseling and will be there for him no matter what you decide. Tom has been getting help with his alcohol abuse, too. Once Tom is free again, they will be there, too. Please take into consideration while considering when sentencing and choosing his placement to serve out his sentence.

Tom has made mistakes, broken the law, and used very bad judgement since returning from Afghanistan, but I do not believe Tom would have harmed anyone or used the guns he was making to harm someone. Please keep in mind, Tom has been a model teen, citizen and has never even received a speeding ticket before all of this happened. Tom has lost his career in the military, and I believe he is at a cross roads where the punishment he receives could either help him by allowing him to receive the counseling he needs for a successful future or he could fall through the cracks. If you need to confirm the facts in the letter, or to reach out to us, we can be reached by email @ taylor_rhonda@hotmail.com or by calling (740)835-1072.

Thank you for your time and for reading this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Rhonda L. Taylor and Henry C. Taylor, Jr.

To Judge Sarah Morrison,
I met Thomas at a large, multinational, joint training event in Fort Polk, Louisiana, during the summer of 2021. He instantly struck me as a very affable and approachable person, able to carry on a conversation with total strangers like myself despite the bleak and uncomfortable conditions we were in at the time. Thomas was always eager to share his experiences in the military with me and coach me on how to better my career. Even now, as I prepare to deploy to the Middle East, Tom has given me a lot of helpful advice drawn from his own trials and tribulations through the letters we've shared. He is a good man who's made mistakes and never hurt anyone.

Thank you for your time,

SPC MacDonald, Evan

10/26/2022

Honorable Judge Morrison,

My name is Jenny Williams. I am a lifelong neighbor to the DeVelin family and an educator in our little community. I have known Tom for the past twenty-five years (his entire lifetime).

I've never written a character reference before and I certainly never imaged my first (and hopefully only) would be for Tom DeVelin. I am sure when you read the court documents, the media press release and the awful statements made about Tom it paints a pretty horrific view of this man in your mind. I can honestly say that I didn't recognize the person that was displayed throughout news articles, social media posts and interviews.

Growing up with the DeVelin family I always joked that I was a sister. His sister and I have been lifelong friends and her family is more family to me than most of my own. I'm sure most character reference letters you will read will include his prestigious awards and accomplishments. He's an Eagle Scout and a proud and committed member of the national guard who has served his country multiple times. Tom volunteered in my classroom to teach my kindergarten students about camping, how to build a tent and did an entire Q&A session. A few years later, he was deployed and my class wrote him letters, he sent us updates along with a flag that had been flown on his deployment. I had several students who wanted to grow up and become soldiers because of Tom. He was a role model.

So what happened? I think somewhere he got lost. He fell into the temptation of wanting to fit in, feeling invincible, was young and dumb if you will. He surrounded himself with people who made poor judgements. He lost sight of who the DeVelin family raised him to be. Tom has made some big mistakes. He has owned up to those mistakes and cooperated with law enforcement every step of the way. I know the hurt and embarrassment that he has caused his family (along with other individuals involved) has been heavy on his heart and he wants to make amends. Up until recent events, Tom has never been in any kind of trouble and has been a role model citizen.

I imagine that being a judge and sentencing can be rather stressful and a big responsibility. If I can promise you one thing, it is that this is not a family that will give up on Tom. Tom is working hard and trying to repair the damage. He is seeking counseling, started a rehabilitation program for veterans, and is trying to pick up the pieces. He is planning for his future. A future in which I plan to support him as well.

It is my sincere hope that the court takes this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing. Despite the recent wrongdoings, I still believe that Tom is an honorable man with a charitable heart and is prepared to make right of his mistakes. If you were to need any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Jenny Williams
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(740) 835-6578